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SUBJECT: DAS CAROL THOMPSON MEETING ANGOLAN VICE FOREIGN
MINISTER: DISASTER RELIEF, VOTER REGISTRATION AND A TIFA

REF: A. LUANDA 84
[1](#)B. LUANDA 75

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: On January 29, 2007, visiting AF DAS Carol Thompson received GRA thanks for the disaster relief assistance provided to Angola by the United States following the recent flooding and noted the positive contribution of the 2005 MEDFLAG Exercise. Thompson reiterated USG interest in moving forward quickly on a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement, and the benefits this could bring to bilateral trade. In addition, she noted the smooth voter registration process and discussed Angola,s possible willingness to join future international peacekeeping missions. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Deputy Assistant Secretary Carol Thompson and Ambassador Cynthia Efird met with Vice Minister of External Relations, Jorge Chicoty, of the Angolan Ministry of External Relations (MIREX) on January 29, 2007, during DAS Thompson,s visit to Angola. In addition to discussing bilateral issues Chicoty discussed at length the changing GRA views regarding Sudanese President Bashir,s candidacy for the Chairmanship of the African Union (AU) (reftel A). Econoff accompanied DAS Thompson and Amb. Efird. Chicoty was joined by America,s Director Balbina da Silva.

U.S. Disaster Assistance

[1](#)3. (SBU) DAS Carol Thompson expressed U.S. concern over Angola,s loss of life and damage caused by recent flooding. Chicoty thanked the United States, commenting that President Dos Santos had noted that the U.S. was the first country to step forward and offer assistance and recalling that Ambassador Efird,s call was made while the rain was still falling. Ambassador Efird mentioned that USD 70,000 in disaster relief money would be disbursed through CARE and used to provide chlorine for water treatment and other emergency supplies. She said we were also hoping to secure U.S. military assistance through the visit of the USS Kauffman for those left homeless. The Ambassador added that the U.S. offer of help comes as one friend to another. Chicoty said that at the initial meeting on the GRA,s emergency response, several Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) generals cited the successful MEDFLAG program of US-Angolan joint military in 2005 as having greatly strengthened their ability for emergency action response. Note: The FAA has been praised in the television and print media, as well as by observers on the ground, for having been quick on the spot to provide logistical assistance to the hardest hit communities as they coped with flooding and mudslides. End Note. Amb. Efird told Vice Minister Chicoty that she would explore possible ways sailors on upcoming SS Kaufmann ship visit could also provide assistance with community action projects in connection with post-flood reconstruction.

Voter Registration

14. (SBU) Chicoty said that the registration process had been going smoothly but slowly, requiring an average of 20 minutes to register each voter. Ambassador Efird described her visit to a voter registration station in Cuando Cubango Province the previous week. One woman said at 4:00 p.m. that she had been waiting since 8:00 a.m. to register. Chicoty explained that verifying the registrant's identity and age accounts for most delays. He added that the National Electoral Commission might need to add more registration stations in order to complete its work on schedule before the end of 2007. DAS Thompson asked whether the registration period might be extended and Chicoty replied that Angola's political parties would have to make that decision.

Trade Agreement (TIFA) with the United States

15. (SBU) DAS Thompson expressed hope that Angola and the United States would soon sign a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) which would help stimulate and energize bilateral trade. Describing Angola as a cutting-edge country, she noted that trade within the SADC will also be important to Angola. She praised Angola's investment in infrastructure rehabilitation, and hoped these improvements, and the TIFA, would attract yet more U.S. investment. Thompson explained that the TIFA process would include visits from working groups to increase GRA capacity to manage trade-related issues. Chicoty then turned to America's Office Director Balbina de Silva to ask, in Portuguese, which internal MIREX approvals the TIFA still needed. Balbina replied that MIREX's legal department was studying the TIFA and that the TIFA needed other clearances, without elaborating, before MIREX could pass the matter to the Council of Ministers. Chicoty sounded

doubtful that the TIFA would need further approvals beyond the legal department's. (Note: Other than this aside, Chicoty conducted the entire meeting in English. End note.)

16. (SBU) Angola regards the United States as an important trading partner, Chicoty offered, citing its recent purchase of Boeing airplanes and adding that Angola will still need one additional Boeing 747. Chicoty believes that Angola would prefer to buy many of the goods and services it needs from the United States and hoped a TIFA agreement would facilitate trade. He regretted that there is still no U.S. bank operating in Angola. Ambassador Efird agreed, while noting that Citibank maintains a representative office in Luanda and that the country was well served by Portuguese, South African and other international banks. Chicoty hoped that with a TIFA, more American businesses would invest in Angola's non-petroleum sectors.

17. (SBU) Chicoty acknowledged that Angola's laws governing business need reform in order to attract investment, but hoped American investment would speed Angola's transition from a socialist to a market economy. The GRA, he said, was beginning to understand that private enterprise could improve on the government's current performance in many sectors, including the distribution grid that provides electricity from the Kapanda Dam. However, privatization also demands a change in the people's thinking. Many Angolans have grown used to free electricity, stealing their power. A private company would have to begin by teaching people to become customers. Chicoty noted sadly that illegal power hook-ups accounted for several electrocutions during the recent flooding. Chicoty also described his own small construction company's trouble in getting commercial bank financing for its projects because gaining clear title to land is so difficult in Angola and bigger fish get preferential treatment. (Note: In August 2006, the GRA issued implementing regulations for its 2004 Land Law. The new regulations clarify titling procedures. End note.)

8. (SBU) Chicoty lamented that Angolans remain passive, expecting to receive handouts, not wanting to work to feed themselves. The Ambassador said she had visited projects

that showed a different, hard-working side of Angolans. She described a USAID-financed pilot project in Cuando Cubango Province that encourages municipal groups to manage and maintain a clean water pump system. To keep their pump going, the residents decided they needed higher income from agriculture. This decision led them to diversify into raising new crops and livestock, she continued. Members of the cooperative also contribute one day a week to the common plot, and this project's success makes it a potential model for agricultural development in the rest of Angola. Chicoty said such a pilot should be replicated, including in his place of birth) Huambo. (N.B. Chicoty's family are traditional leaders in the Plan Alto.)

Participation in Peacekeeping Mission

¶9. (SBU) If there is an A.U. consensus to send troops, Chicoty said, Angola might participate in the command structure of a peacekeeping force in Somalia. He continued that this work is important, but stressed that Angola wants good intelligence before it sends in any troops. Now that Angola has been elected to the A.U. Peace and Security Council, it has a responsibility to uphold, he continued. Chicoty then reiterated reasons he had given previously for Angolan reluctance to take on peacekeeping missions: concern that rules of engagement might not be clear and robust and Angolan troops could find themselves facing international charges of human rights violations. Ambassador Efird proposed that if Angola decides to contribute troops to a peacekeeping force but finds itself short of equipment or supplies to conduct a peacekeeping mission, that it approach the United States. Without promising assistance, she assured Chicoty that Angolan requests would get a hearing.

¶10. (SBU) Comment. Chicoty sees a definite advantage to Angola from a TIFA, however, his sidebar with his Americas Office Director suggests that the GRA bureaucracy is moving forward slowly and certainly on this agreement. We understand from the Ministry of Commerce and Trade that an interagency group has yet to jointly review the TIFA text. The Angolan political is definitely in place to sign the TIFA but we will continue to &hand-hold8 the Angolan bureaucracy during the drafting process. The new Angolan willingness to consider sending its troops on peacekeeping missions seems to go with an enhanced sense of responsibility since joining the A.U. Peace and Security Council and assuming the Vice Chairmanship.

¶11. (U) DAS Thompson has cleared this cable.
EFIRD